Measuring the Blocking of Websites and Apps

Social media (e.g. WhatsApp) and VPNs are frequently blocked during elections and protests around the world.

To investigate the potential blocking of websites and applications in your country, run tests from the OONI Probe app based on the instructions shared below.

Install OONI Probe

The OONI Probe app (created by a non-profit called OONI) is designed to measure the blocking of websites and apps.

Get the OONI Probe app on Mobile and Desktop:

Please turn your VPN off when running OONI Probe to help ensure more accurate test results.

Automated testing

Enable Automated testing in the OONI Probe settings so that all tests are run automatically every day.

This way, you don’t need to remember to run OONI Probe, and if new blocks emerge, you are more likely to test them!
**Test social media websites**

To test the blocking of popular social media websites:

1. Install the **OONI Probe mobile app** (if you haven’t already): [https://ooni.org/install/mobile](https://ooni.org/install/mobile)
2. Access this page from the web browser of your mobile phone: [https://ooni.org/get-involved/run](https://ooni.org/get-involved/run)
3. Tap on the **“Social Media (39 URLs)”** button from that page.
4. Open the link (from that button) with your OONI Probe mobile app.
5. You will now see the list of social media websites in your OONI Probe mobile app. Tap **Run** to test them.

**Test social media apps**

To test the blocking of instant messaging apps such as **WhatsApp**, **Facebook Messenger**, **Signal** and **Telegram** apps, tap **Run** in the Instant Messaging card inside the OONI Probe app (or just tap the main “Run” button to run all tests).

**VPN testing**

If you feel comfortable testing the blocking of VPNs and/or if you notice that VPNs become unusable, you can run the **Circumvention** card inside the OONI Probe app to test **Tor** and the **Psiphon** app.

In addition, you can test the blocking of VPN websites through the following steps:

1. Install the **OONI Probe mobile app** (if you haven’t already): [https://ooni.org/install/mobile](https://ooni.org/install/mobile)
2. Access this page from the web browser of your mobile phone: [https://ooni.org/get-involved/run](https://ooni.org/get-involved/run)
3. Tap on the **“VPNs (21 URLs)”** button from that page.
4. Open the link (from that button) with your OONI Probe mobile app.
5. You will now see the list of VPN websites in your OONI Probe mobile app. Tap **Run** to test them.
Other tests

By tapping Run in the dashboard of the OONI Probe mobile app, you will run all OONI Probe tests.

These tests measure:

- Blocking of websites
- Blocking of instant messaging apps (WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Signal and Telegram)
- Blocking of circumvention tools
- Speed and performance of your network

To test the website of your choice:

1. Tap on the Websites card inside the OONI Probe app.
2. Tap on the “Choose websites” button.
3. Add the website you want to test in the URL slot.
4. Tap “Run”.

Test results

As soon as you run an OONI Probe test, you can access the test result through the Test Results section of the OONI Probe app.

Unless you opt out (through the settings), your test results will automatically get published in near real-time as open data.
Some things to be aware of include:

- Anyone monitoring your internet activity (such as your government or local Internet Service Provider) will know that you are running OONI Probe;

- If you do the default website testing (without specifying which websites to test), you might test some websites which might be viewed as objectionable or provocative in some countries;

- By default, all test results are openly published (but you can opt-out in the settings).

You can learn about OONI data practices through our Data Policy.

Contacting OONI

If you have questions, please feel encouraged to reach the OONI team by sending an email to contact@openobservatory.org.

You can also reach the OONI team (and global OONI community) on Slack: https://slack.ooni.org/

OONI

Founded in 2012, the Open Observatory of Network Interference (OONI) is a non-profit free software project documenting Internet censorship around the world.

Learn more about OONI: https://ooni.org/